Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9830
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
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DEPARTMENT PASS USDA/FAS GRAIN & FEED FCA

MEXICO, CARACAS, BOGOTA & BRASILIA FOR AGATTACHES

E.O. 11652: N/A TAGS: EAGR, AR

SUBJECT: LATIN AMERICAN GRAIN BUYING MISSIONS DESCENDING OF ARGENTINA

REF: MEXICO TOFAS 51

1. ACCORDING TO AVAILABLE INFORMATION, MEXICAN GRAIN DELEGATION DID NOT PURCHASE ANY GRAIN FROM ARGENTINA DURING RECENT VISIT. CONASUPO DIRECTOR, GONZALEZ COSIO DESCRIBED AS CORDIAL AND VERY CONVERSANT ON LITERATURE AND ARTS, BUT STATED ON ARRIVAL THAT MEXICO DESIRED TOPURCHASE WHITE CORN (WHICH ARGENTINA DOES NOT HAVE) AND THAT MEXICO DOES NOT REALLY LIKE RED QUALITIES OF FLINT CORN (WHICH IS VIRTUALLY ALL THAT ARGENTINA HAS). GENERAL COMMENT WAS THAT IF MISSION WAS A BUYING ONE, IT MUST HAVE BEEN INTERESTED IN BUYING THINGS OTHER THAN GRAINS.

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- 2. NATIONAL GRAIN BOARD ARRANGED VISIT AND OFFERED ITS FACILITIES FOR THE OPENNING MEETING, BUT MEXICANS THEN WENT ON TO SEE COOPS AND PRIVATE SHIPPERS. GRAIN BOARD HAD NOT RECEIVED ANY ENCOURAGING REPORTS BACK FROM EITHER COOPS OR SHIPPERS. SOURCES SAID THAT MISSION ALSO REPORTEDLY VISITED BRAZIL.
- 3. ACCORDING TO TRADE SOURCES, GRAIN MISSIONS EXPECTED SHORTLY

FROM VENEZUELA AND COLOMBIA. SOURCE FEELS THAT SUDDEN LATIN AMERICAN INTEREST IN POSSIBLE ARGENTINE GRAIN PURCHASES PROBABLY RELATED TO RECENT FOREIGN POLICY SOLIDARITY AMONG LATINS IN OPPOSITION TO SEVERAL RECENT U.S. FOREIGN POLICY STANDS. HOWEVER, SAME SOURCE BELIEVES THAT AT LEAST IN CASE OF GRAIN PURCHASES, THIS SOLIDARITY WILL BE SHORT LIVED ONCE ECONOMIC REALITIES ARE DISCERNED. FOR EXAMPLE, THIS PAST WEEK, TRADE SOURCES REPORT THAT VENEZUELA CALLED A 300,000 TONS GRAIN SORGHUM IMPORT TENDER WITH OBJECTIVE OF PURCHASING ARGENTINE SORGHUM, BUT SINCE U.S. SORGHUM OFFERED AT \$85 FOB (ABOUT \$92 CIF) AND ARGENTINE OFFERED AT \$87 FOB (ABOUT \$105 CIF), DIFFERENTIAL OF \$13 ON CIF BASIS WAS TOO LARGE FOR VENEZUELAN TO SWALLOW IN NAME OF LATIN AMERICAN SOLIDARITY AND IMPORT TENDER WAS CANCELLED.

4. AGATT WILL TRY TO CONTINUE TO MONITOR DEVELOPMENTS OF VISITING GRAIN MISSIONS, BUT WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE INFORMATION FROM ORIGIN COUNTRIES.
HILL

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